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THE LIGHT OF A GOSPEL MINISTER.

THE SUBSTANCE
OF

A SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY

The much-lamented Death

OF THE

REV. GEORGE PATTRICK, LL. B.

*Vicar of Avely, Essex; Joint-Lecturer of St. Leonard's; and
Evening Lecturer of St. Bride's, London:*

PREACHED IN

THE PARISH CHURCH

OF

ST. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH,

On Sunday, the 5th of October, 1800,

BY THE

REV. W. B. WILLIAMS, B. A.

CHAPLAIN TO THE MARQUIS OF DOWNSHIRE.

[*Published by Request.*]

They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and
they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever.

DAN. xii. 3.

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TO THE
WORTHY PARISHIONERS
OF
ST. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH,
THIS SERMON
IS INSCRIBED,
BY
THEIR OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

*High Wycombe, Bucks,
10th October, 1800.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Reader of the following Discourse will consider that as the SUBJECT led to a consideration of the *Character and Work of a Minister*; the OCCASION and PLACE naturally called for an exemplification thereof in ONE, who is alike out of the reach of praise and censure. Let this plead the *Author's* apology, where otherwise he might seem *presuming* on the one hand, or *partial and prolix* on the other.

He takes this opportunity of also adding, that the Discourse is not given *verbatim*, as some things have escaped recollection, and on some points there is a little enlargement: but the difference is by no means material. Such as it is, he commits it to a *candid* Public, and particularly to the *Congregation* for whom it was constructed. God of his infinite mercy grant, that wherever it meets the eye, it may also reach the heart!

A

S E R M O N, &c.

JOHN v. 35.

He was a burning and a shining Light ; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

TO desire a remembrance beyond the grave—to have our names mentioned with respect, perhaps, “breathed in sighs or ultered with a tear—is natural to man ; and, with many, is the ruling passion strong in death.”

But what is the posthumous praise of creatures themselves hastening to the land of forgetfulness, compared with acceptance by the great Creator ? What, the page of the historian to *the book of life* ?* What all the honours upon earth to emblazon our fame, contrasted with the peace of a renewed conscience, and the testimony of a reconciled God ?

Such a testimony had John the Baptist from him who knew his heart. He was now in the

* Phil. iv. 5.

gloom of a prison, if not cut off by *the adulterers who hunted for his life.** His labours were closed. His sun was set. And when *he* died—no funeral oration proclaimed his many virtues, no monumental stone preserved his name. But had a pyramid been erected, and were it now standing to his memory, how insignificant to this short, but comprehensive and immortal record from the Saviour of the world ! the Lord of angels ! the Judge of quick and dead ! “ HE WAS A BURNING AND A SHINING LIGHT ? ”—and then, no doubt, in reference to the reception of his past ministry, and with a view to the present benefit of the surrounding multitude, it is added, “ AND YE WERE WILLING FOR A SEASON TO REJOICE IN HIS LIGHT.”

All circumstances considered, the words of the text, methinks, could not be more truly applied to the faithful preacher of righteousness in the wilderness of Judea, than to that zealous minister of the Gospel of peace whose loss we this day deplore. This is no exaggerated statement : for *life and immortality* are so clearly *brought to light in the Gospel* † that even *the glory of Moses* is lost *by reason of the glory that excelleth.* ‡ And although *among them that are born of women there*

* Prov. vi. 25. † 2 Tim. i. 10. ‡ 2 Cor. iii. 10.

*arose not in Jewish times a greater than John the Baptist, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, or the Gospel dispensation, is greater than he. **

We have then scriptural licence for an extended *use* of the passage before us ; and undoubted authority for its particular *application* to our dear departed friend, since he had a most decisive *testimony before* his departure *that he pleased God* : † Heaven waited not the last moment, but “ owned him for her own on this side death, and points him out to man.”

That we may thus *mark* as well as *behold the upright* ‡—that the removal of *the righteous* may be *taken to heart*—that while the *memory of the just* § is respected, the state of the living may be improved—that we may remember our leaders who have spoken to us the word of God, the final issue of whose conduct, attentively observing, we may be imitators of their fidelity.” ||—Such, I trust, are the motives that assemble us with one accord in this place ; and for which, this pulpit was solicited, and kindly granted.

It now falls to the lot of this feeble tongue to request your patient hearing, and also to entreat your fervent prayers. Depressed under the recent loss of a most affectionate parent ; and now

* Matt. xi. 11. † Heb. xi. 5. ‡ Ps. xxxvii. 37.

§ Isa. lvii. 1. || Heb. xiii. 7.

standing up on an account of the unexpected bereavement of a *friend as my own soul* *—in the place where he so lately laboured, and *on* the day he meditated his return—I need a peculiar interest in your supplications that I may be assisted throughout this painful, yet pleasing service. And may the God of all grace so own and bless this opportunity, that like another Samson, *more may be slain by the death of his servant, than in his life!* †

What have we in the text? Evidently, *our blessed Saviour's testimony to the character of a departed minister*, under the metaphor of "LIGHT." Thus instructed, let us consider the emblem with reference to a Gospel ministry considered in its SOURCE—PROPERTIES—EFFECT—and DURATION.

I. What is the SOURCE, or origin of this LIGHT?

If we revert in a *material* sense to the source and origin of all *light*, it appears that *darkness covered the face of the earth*, until God said, *let there be light, and there was light.* ‡

But there is another kind of darkness, worse than that which covered the land of Egypt, when no man could *stir from his place*. I mean the darkness of the carnal mind, and *foolish*

* Deut. xiii. 6. † Judges xvi. 32. ‡ Gen. i. 3.

heart.

heart. This is that gross darkness which covers the people,† until He who at the first commanded the light to shine, shines into the sinner's heart : ‡ then, and not till then, the eyes of the spiritually blind are opened; the soul once darkness becomes light in the Lord; and henceforth, shines in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.§*

Such is the repeated declaration of the word of God. Concerning the sons and daughters of fallen Adam, there is no exception to the general statement, that their *understanding is darkened*; that they *love darkness rather than light*; that they even *bate the light.*|| The *natural man seeth not* the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, for they are *spiritually discerned.*¶ The “inward light” for which some contend, serves only to encrease the surrounding gloom; and can no more avail in directing us to heaven, than the light of a glow-worm in their vessel could have conducted the mariners of Alexandria through the trackless deep, in that tremendous storm, when *neither sun nor moon nor stars for many days appeared.***

There is no *spiritual light*, Brethren, but *from above*; whence cometh *every good and perfect gift.††*

* Rom. i. 21.

† If. lx. 2.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 6.

§ Phil. ii. 15.

|| John iii. 19, 20.

¶ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

** Acts xxvii. 20.

†† James i. 17.

Jesus saith, *I am the light of the world.** The Evangelist and beloved Disciple saw him to be the *only* light of the new Jerusalem above.† No other was vouchsafed, for no other was required.

And not less surely are the mystical lamps of the temple indebted to him who *walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks,‡* and holds these *stars in his right hand.§* If every man be by nature wretched, miserable, poor, and *blind;||* his being ordained a minister will only constitute him a “blind leader of the blind,”¶ unless he *himself* be called from *darkness to marvellous light.***—A change of *situation* does not always imply a change of *state*.

Our departed brother, on his entrance into the ministry, was by no means that light he afterwards proved. With him it was a gradual work, like the dawning day before the rising sun. “The Lord gently *opened his heart,††* and by degrees discovered to his willing mind the great truths of the Gospel.” From that time *his path was that of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day;‡‡* he no longer *conferred with flesh and blood,* but cheerfully gave up flattering prospects of preferment; carried his cross;

* John ix. 5.

† Rev. xxi. 23.

‡ Rev. i. 13.

§ Rev. i. 16.

|| Rev. iii. 17.

¶ Matt. xv. 14.

** 1 Pet. ii. 9.

†† Acts xvi. 14.

‡‡ Prov. iv. 18.

went forth without the camp bearing his reproach; * and preached Jesus, and his free, full, and *finished* salvation.

To a conduct thus decided we may principally attribute the glory of his latter days. *Them that honour me*, says God, *I will honour* : † not that a minister's sincerity is to be determined by his success, or that his grace is to be inferred from his gifts; but we affirm that wherever the word is preached unadulterated, and with simplicity, there in general will be *the signs following* : ‡ the deaf shall hear God's wonders, the dumb shall speak his praises, and the *blind* shall see his glory.

Let no man conceit from hence, that *he* is any thing of himself; for, *what hast thou that thou hast not received* ? § Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God, had nothing *whereof to glory* || in His sight before whom *no man living can be justified* ; ¶ and John the Baptist, although “ a burning and a shining light,” had no flame nor brightness which Christ had not first kindled from his own glory. No light is reflected by the brightest seraph that surrounds the throne, but what is first received from Him that *sits thereon*.

And I would just observe, concerning divine

* Heb. xiii. 13.

† 1 Sam. ii. 30.

‡ Mark xvi. 20.

§ 1 Cor. iv. 7.

|| Rom. iv. 2.

¶ Pl. cxliii. 2.

light, that it must be a *continued* source—a *constant* supply ; daily must the Sun of Righteousness *arise and shine* : thus, in Midian, the bush *burned with fire*, and was *not consumed*, because THE LORD *was in it*.*

II. What are the PROPERTIES or evidences of this *light*, as manifested in a minister of Christ ? The Baptist is described as being “ a *burning* and a *shining* light.” By which we may understand warmth and illumination : an inward *supply*, and an outward *evidence* or full proof of his ministry.†

These two properties God hath joined together : only to shine, will not better ourselves ; merely to burn, will not profit others. In our brother these qualities happily united. His zeal was tempered with knowledge, it gave *light* to the understanding ; his knowledge was actuated by zeal, it was *burning*, and penetrated to the heart : his discourses were no scraps of dull morality—no cold, moon-light speculations—no *darkening*‡ of counsel by words without knowledge—but having had his own lip touched with a *live coal from the altar*,§ the minister became a *flame of fire* || in the sacred cause. Did he *speak boldly* and *as he ought to speak* ? It was

* Exod. iii. 2. † 2 Tim. iv. 5.

‡ Job. xxxviii. 2. § Isa. vi. 6. || Heb. i. 7.

because

because his heart *was hot within him*.* This gave energy to his speech, while God gave unction to the sound ; the word of salvation “ went forth as *brightness*.” and became verily “ as a lamp that *burneth*.” † How often have *our hearts burned within us* while he spake of JESUS, and opened to us the *Scriptures* ? ‡ And who, at such seasons, but has been ready to confess the danger of inconsideracy, the madness of impiety, and the folly of unbelief ?

Preserving in view the two-fold description in the text, a *minister* (for to such the subject and the occasion lead our thoughts) should pray, and endeavour, according to his talent and sphere, to be evidencing these properties—

1. In his *Doctrine*. Concerning the light of doctrine we read, that “ if our Gospel be hid, “ it is hid to them that are lost ; in whom the “ God of this world hath blinded the minds of “ them that believe not, lest *the light of the glorious Gospel* of Christ, who is the image of “ God, should shine unto them. For we preach “ not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and “ ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For “ God who commanded the light to shine out “ of darkness hath *shined into our hearts*, to give

* Ps. xxxix. 3.

† Isa. lxii. 1.

‡ Luke xxiv. 32,

“ *the*

“ *the light of the knowledge of the glory of
“ God in the face of Jesus Christ.*”*

Had your late minister been apprized, the last time he addressed you from this pulpit, that *all you among whom he had gone preaching the kingdom of God, should see his face no more*, might he not with propriety have addressed you in the affecting words of St. Paul to the church at Ephesus, and appealed to your consciences, that, notwithstanding many imperfections, he *had not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God?*† That he came among you with this determination, appears from the following extract from the sermon preached and published on that occasion.

“ I hope in coming to you I may be enabled
“ to say as the Apostle did, *I am determined to
“ know nothing amongst you save Jesus Christ, and
“ him crucified.* And O! what a fund! what a rich
“ magazine have I here to disclose to you, when
“ I bear testimony to Christ as God; and to
“ Christ as God-man—Emanuel God with us!
“ and herein the dignity of his person; the sove-
“ reignty of his will; the wisdom and stability
“ of his counsels; the immutability of his co-
“ venant; the eternity and unchangeableness of
“ his love; the freedom of his grace; the suit-

* 2 Cor. iv. 3—6. † Acts xx. 25.

“ ableness

“ableness of his salvation; the preciousness of
 “his blood; the sufficiency of his atonement;
 “the completeness as well as necessity of his
 “obedience and righteousness to justify believ-
 “ing sinners; and the efficacy of his sanctifying
 “and renewing Spirit, to work in them that ho-
 “liness, without which no man shall see the
 “Lord.”

“These are some out of the many things per-
 “taining to Jesus Christ, of which, by the help
 “of his grace, I am to bear a testimony to the
 “parishioners of *St. Leonard*.”

In this quotation we have a full range of the
truth as it is in Jesus. There is nothing softened
 down to the prejudice, or given up to the pride
 of man. The light of the Gospel is not to be
hid under a bushel, but is to be *set on the candle-*
stick to give light to them that are in the house;* it
 is never to be eclipsed or shaded to please *the*
moles and the bats;† the Gospel is to have *no*
veil put upon it, but, *we all with open* (or *unveiled*
gr.) *face beholding as in a glass the glory of the*
Lord are changed into the same image from glory to
glory as by the Spirit of the Lord ‡

2. By his *life and conversation*.—If the doctrine
 be of God, it will be according to godliness. It
 appears from the preceding extract, that our

* Matt. v. 15.

† Is. ii. 20.

‡ 2 Cor. iii. 12—14, 18.

brother held a *personal election*, but it was through *sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience* : * he maintained the *perseverance of the saints*, but he shewed that none had any hope of their privilege, who were destitute of their practice.

Might he not say, appealing chiefly to them who knew him best, “ *ye are witnesses, how holily and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe : as you know how we exhorted you and comforted and charged you (as a father doth his children) that ye would walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory ?* ” † Unless a man endeavour to *live* as well as *preach* the Gospel—however learned, fluent, or popular, he is but a *wandering star* soon to *fall from his orbit*, ‡ and for whom is reserved the *blackness of darkness for ever* ! §—Marvel not at this. Know ye not that *Satan* is transformed into an *angel of light* ? || But he cannot transform himself into an *angel of love*.

And here I am not conscious of thinking *more highly* of our departed brother *than I ought to think*, when I affirm that his piety was uncommon, and such as few have attained unto. He was eminently a man of prayer, and personal religion ; and he shone not only in the church,

* 1 Pet. i. 2. † 1 Thess. ii. 10—12. ‡ Rev. viii. 10—12.

§ Jude v. 13.

|| 2 Cor. xi. 13—15.

but in the closet; not merely before his flock; but before his family; and proved that he walked close *with God*.* How different the light of our brother from that *affectation* of shining, or blaze and crackling of thorns—that temporizing conduct and behaviour—that egotism and self-sufficiency—that spirit of *Diotrephes*,† accompanied with every petty art to eclipse another’s merit, or depreciate his peculiar gift—in brief, for the recital is painful, that *inconsistent conduct*, which renders it a matter of doubt, whether a man has ever himself been humbled before God as “deserving God’s wrath and damnation” ‡ on his head, and is now at the foot of the cross feeling *the plague of his own heart*? § There was nothing of this in the deceased. He was a decided Christian; had set his name down, and was with heart and hand on the Lord’s side. It was no matter of doubtful speculation whether or not he *felt* what he *said*—whether his lamp was burning or not—it did not merely twinkle or glimmer—no, it *shone* before men, and they *seeing* his good works, *glorified their heavenly Father*. || Often has he expressed to his intimate friends his mingled sentiments of gratitude, and wonder and praise that God should

* Amos iii. 3. Gen. v. 22. vi. 9. † 3 John, v. 9.

‡ See Art. ix. § 1 Kings, viii. 38. || Matt. v. 16.

so honour him, as an instrument in *holding forth the word of life*.* Although thousands attended his ministry, no one appeared to have learned more perfectly, that *neither is he that planteth any thing nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase*.† Though the treasure he imparted was better than the gold of Ophir or the riches of Egypt, he forgot not that the vessel containing it was *earthen*.‡

Let me add, before I proceed to the next particular of discourse, that it is a *property* of this light to be perpetual. It shall never be *put out in darkness* : § the oil that supplies it can never fail. There is certainly much variation in the believer's frame ; he does not always shine thus with equal lustre. Peter's sun was bright on Mount Tabor ; on Mount Olivet it was dim ; and ere the sad scene on Mount Calvary, it suffered an eclipse ! but shall he perish for whom Christ prayed ? No. He who could have frowned him into despair, looked him into repentance ; and breathed *the smoking flax* || into a holy flame which many waters could not quench, nor seas of tribulation drown !

III. The *effect* of a Gospel ministry. “ They rejoiced in the light.”

* Phil. ii. 16.

† 1 Cor. iii. 7.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 7.

§ Prov. xx, 20.

|| Matt. xii. 20.

This effect evidently respects professors, or those who attended with some attention on the word. To many it is a message of evil tidings; and therefore they shut their eyes, harden their hearts, and refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely.*

In reference to those who may be said to “rejoice in the light,” we must accurately distinguish between those who *rejoice in Christ Jesus* ;† and those who are pleased, but not profited.

(I.) As to the *former*. It is neither to be denied nor evaded, that when once true religion has taken possession of the heart, it is always accompanied with its *sorrows* : with sorrows which belong to the very nature of true religion. Such, for example, are the sorrows of repentance—which is said to be a *godly sorrow* ‡ for sin. And the sorrows which arise from the *manifold temptations* § to which the genuine Christian is ever exposed. And more particularly that perpetual sorrow of heart which the Apostle so pathetically expresses, when he exclaims in the bitterness of his soul, “*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death!*”||

Let it be remembered, however, that all these sorrows are *bleſſed* sorrows. They are sorrows

* Pf. lviii. 4. † Phil. iii. 3. ‡ 2 Cor. vii. 10.

§ 1 Pet. i. 6. || Rom. vii. 24.

most devoutly to be wished ; and to those who know how to estimate them aright, they are to be preferred to all the pleasures of this evil world ; because it is said in the scriptures of truth, *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted !**

But though religion has its pious sorrows, it has also its spiritual joys. The Gospel is emphatically a joyful sound†—glad tidings of great joy‡—and both joy and peace are in believing. When Philip preached Christ in Samaria, we are told there was joy in that city§—a joy above that of harvest, or of they that divide the spoil;|| joy, mighty ! unspeakable ! and full of glory !¶

(2.) While, however, those who receive the atonement, thus joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ,** and bring forth fruit; the seed falls also on stony places ; these are they, said the divine expositor, who hear the word, and anon with joy receive it, but having no root, when tribulation or persecution cometh, they are offended.††

Both these descriptions are to be met with in our worshipping congregations : as to their proportion, under our friend's ministry, it would be impertinent to form a conjecture ; the full

* Matt. v. 4.

† Pl. lxxxix. 15.

‡ Luke ii. 10.

§ Acts viii. 8.

|| Isa. ix. 3.

¶ 1 Pet. i. 8.

** Rom. v. 3.

†† Matt. xiii. 20, 21.

effect of his endeavours will not be known until he meets you at the bar of God. Of many, I doubt not he could say, "*What is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not ye dearly beloved in the Lord?*"* May every minister who labours in this place stately, or occasionally, have this *his joy fulfilled!*

Others there were, it is to be feared, to whom he was but as *a very lovely song, and one who played well on a musical instrument.*† They were pleased with the harmony in their ears, but had no responsive melody in their hearts—they were satisfied with *his light*, but were regardless of *their own*; they were content with the *lamp* of profession, while destitute of the *oil* of grace.

Over these every servant of God will mourn in secret places. Though he be *glorified*, you are not yet *gathered!* Yet are you invited; and we pray you as in *Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.*‡ After so long a time, it is still *the accepted time*, and after *so many days* it is *the day of salvation.*§ The *harvest is past, the summer is ended*—but there is *balm in Gilead, and a physician there.*|| O harden not your hearts; for *the night cometh*

* 1 Theff. ii. 19. † Ezek. xxxiii. 32. ‡ 2 Cor. v. 20.

§ 2 Cor. vi. 2.

|| Jer. viii. 20, 22.

when no man can work, as appears from our next consideration,

IV. The DURATION of a minister's light. It is "for a season."

To every thing there is an appointed *time and season*.* The longest day must end, the brightest sun will set. "*Our fathers, where are they? And the prophets, do they live for ever?*"† A child born, is in a progress towards death; a building finished, has already begun to decay, and an union formed, looks forward to the day of its dissolution. Mutability is to be seen throughout the whole system of created existence.‡ Universal nature is continually varying. The earth and the seas are ever in motion. Changeableness marks every scene. *The fashion of this world passeth away!*§ He only is immutable, who has *neither beginning of years nor end of days*; and who, while the heavens wax old as a garment, and are changed as a vesture, remains *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*||

* Ecclef. iii. 1.

† Zeck. i. 5.

‡ ——— Behold, fond man!

See here thy pictur'd life. Pass some few years,
Thy flow'ring *Spring*, thy *Summer's* ardent strength,
Thy sober *Autumn* fading into age,
And pale concluding *Winter* comes at last,
And shuts the scene.

THOMSON.

§ 1 Cor. vii. 31

|| Heb. xiii. 7.

The

The season for every opportunity, at its longest period, is but short; and at its best estate is uncertain. *What is your life?* It is but a *vapour* that appeareth but a *little time*, and then *vanisheth away*! Comparatively as brittle in its texture, as brief in its duration.*

1. *National* privileges when abused are but for a season. Where are the seven churches in Asia, termed the *seven golden candlesticks*?† Did not a provoked God strengthen the hands of Turks and Saracens to punish them for their corruptions; and that whole country where they once flourished and gave as *the light of seven days*,‡ is now enveloped in the darkness of ignorance, and the grossness of superstition. May God help us to *remember whence we are fallen and to repent*; lest he come unto us *quickly*, and remove our *candlestick out of its place*! §

2. Individual blessings and opportunities either of receiving or imparting light and knowledge have their limited *season*. And the oracles of God in almost every page, as well as experience in almost every event, are continually inculcating the same truth. They forcibly appeal to our understandings, and bring it home to our hearts.

* *ωρος ωραν* for an hour.—Text.

† Rev. i. 12.

‡ Isa. xxx. 26.

§ Rev. ii. 5.

Need we an evidence of the shortness, frailty, and vanity of human life ? Behold it in the almost sudden, and certainly unexpected removal of so burning and shining a light in the apparent zenith of his usefulness. It was on Sunday, the 4th of December, 1796, he first entered upon the office of Joint-Lecturer of this parish, and in less than four years he has been removed from this hemisphere to *shine in the firmament of Heaven*.* Why his season was thus short in this place, is not for man to question. God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.

But while *we are dumb and open not our mouth† to cavil* ; if we incline our ear, *the rod and reproof* shall teach us *wisdom*.‡

May we not suspect, lest some—pardon my jealousy for you—might think too much of the *minister*, and too little of the *master* ? And may not God by this dispensation be instructing us that the prosperity of the church depends not on any *means*, however excellent ; or on any *man*, however eminent ? That *from the stones he can raise up children unto Abraham*,§ and that he will *send by whom he will*.|| The Lord has but to *speak the word*, and *great shall be the company of the preachers*.¶

* Dan. xii. 3.

† Ps. xxxix. 2.

‡ Prov. xxix. 15.

§ Matt. iii. 9.

|| Exod. iv. 13.

¶ Ps. lxviii. 11.

Has it not the appearance of a *controversy* with us, when the righteous are taken from *the evil to come*?* If an ambassador be suddenly recalled, have we not reason to fear lest the king be angry?

Is it not teaching us the value of those blessings, and of that light so little prized? May He not be making us feel the *worth* of a privilege, by its *want*?

Does it not call aloud to duty?—to *watchfulness*, *reflection*, and *serious examination*? What improvement has been made in past seasons and opportunities—what progress in the divine life—what preparation for the last day, in proportion as we *see the day approaching*?†

Are not these, and similar bereavements, intended to lead us nearer to our God? Is it not saying in effect, “Come, soul, I will bring thee closer yet. I have destroyed thy gourd, but it is that thou mayest *sit under my shadow*. I have cut off a stream, but it is to incline thee to the ever full and flowing fountain. Though *Joseph be not, and Simeon be not*, JESUS is yet alive. *I am he that liveth, that was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death.*”‡

* Isa. lvii. 1.

† Heb. x. 25.

‡ Rev. i. 18.

And lastly, is it not proving the incalculable worth of that principle which can influence a man, though surrounded by every comfort, and alive to every feeling that could render life desirable, to long to depart, and to welcome death as a joyful messenger?

Such are amongst the many lessons which the man of wisdom will learn at this season. Some of them are peculiarly inculcated by his dying experience, which I shall now read, and in which we perceive the lamp burning bright, in the dark valley of the shadow of death.

“ From the time of Mr. Patrick’s arrival in *Madely* (Wednesday evening, August the 27th) he appeared much indisposed, and on the following Sabbath (the 31st) was so ill that his friends wished him not to venture into the pulpit; but he loved his Master’s work, and would not yield to their entreaties, saying, “ I shall forget *myself* whilst I am so well engaged.” He preached twice: in the morning, from the Shunamite’s son being raised from the dead;* and in the afternoon, from those sweet words, now realized by him in all their glory—“ *The chiefest among ten thousand.*†”

* 1 Kings xvii.

† Cant. v. 10.

“ From

“ From this time his disorder encreased ; and it may well be said his spiritual strength was abundantly renewed. He laid aside every temporal concern, and was wholly and deeply occupied in eternal things. Even when the violence of the fever a little disordered his mind, it was plain his heart and treasure were in heaven : thither his soul continually ascended, and the words he uttered were full of God.

“ He was much in prayer for the *Church of God*, particularly for the flock under his care, that he might meet them all at the right hand of God at the last great day. For *himself*, that he might be found without spot ; and for his *dear wife*, whose affectionate distress was too visible not to rend his soul with extreme sensibility, that he might be enabled to resign her : often blessing God for the help and comfort she had been to him, and crying out, “ *O Lord, help me to give her up—thou hast all power—thou wilt help.*”

“ He often expressed his satisfaction of being at *Madely*, as the very place, of all others, where he should wish to end his days ; and it was evident from the beginning, he expected this illness would prove his last. He spoke of death as near ; and observed at the same time, that his whole dependance was upon a crucified Saviour, on

whom *alone* his hopes were built as the only sure foundation. He felt himself *the chief of sinners*, and lamented his unprofitableness. "But oh!" he exclaimed, "*that open fountain! there I rest all my confidence.—Was it not for that, I should have no hope.*"

"One time, when Mrs. P. was sitting by his bed-side, he said with great solemnity—"Those are fine words,* *I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die! Believeest thou this?*" And with great emphasis added, "*That's the point.*"

"His friends, fearing he exhausted himself with too much speaking, begged he would compose himself and take some rest; but he replied, "*No interruption. I must speak—the time is expired; if I stop, the enemy will gain ground.*" The accuser of the brethren, who knew his time was short, and that soon the glorified spirit would be for ever beyond the reach of his malice, did not fail to shoot his darts at him; but he took refuge in Jesus, and was more than conqueror.

"On Saturday (Sept. 13.) he suffered much, had little sleep, and was very restless. But then, as throughout the whole of his illness, his pa-

* John xi. 25, 26.

tience was exemplary; not a complaining word ever escaped him at any time: now his soul was more than ever on the wing. The few remaining hours were mostly taken up in prayer and praise, admiring the goodness of God towards him; and exhorting those about him as he was able, in many precious and lively, though broken sentences. One time, with much earnestness, he broke forth—“*Lord, shall I dwell with thee on Zion's hill? Shall I, Lord?*” Then, praying and looking up, he continued, “*Yes, yes, I know I shall! But, is the work done?*” He repeated this several times, as though he longed for a fuller assurance of faith. “*Is the work done, Lord? Thou must do it thyself. I am a poor, weak, sinful creature; but if any sin remains in me, take it away, take away every spot.*”

“At another time he said, “But, Lord, hast thou not said, *the soul that sinneth, it shall die?* Yes, thou hast. But *the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*; and thou hast cleansed me.” Then in a holy rapture he repeated,

“My God, I am thine,

“What a comfort divine!

“What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine!”

“Soon after he said, “*I think I am pretty high upon the mount to-day.*”

“When

“ When he heard the bell ring for church on Sunday (Sept. 14.) he asked what it was. On being told, he replied—“ *How often have I gone up with joy to worship in the assembly of thy saints!*”

“ About four in the afternoon he was seized with a convulsion, which did not last long. As soon as he a little revived, he began again, with a clear strong voice, more powerfully to address those that were about him.—“ My friends, “ it is an *awful thing to die!* O prepare for eternity!” He then offered his dying petition for his dear wife and children—“ *Lord support the widow and fatherless in every dispensation that may occur!*” He was desired by Mrs. Ferriday not to exert himself so much; but he answered—“ *My dear mother, I must. God has given me strength, and I must use it.*” Soon after, lifting up his hands with an extacy, and with a voice and manner that cannot be described, he exclaimed, “ *God is all in all! Come, Lord Jesus, now come! I am God’s, and God is mine!—Christ is mine!—Heaven is mine!—Glory is mine!* GLORY, GLORY BE TO GOD FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN AND AMEN.”

“ He lay quiet a few moments, and then was seized with another convulsion, which soon dislodged

lodged his immortal spirit, and landed it in the paradise of God, about five o'clock on Sunday evening, the 14th of September, in the 54th year of his age, and the 30th of his ministry.

“ On the Wednesday following his remains were solemnly interred in Madely church, close by the tomb of the Rev. Mr. Fletcher, and near the spot where, six years ago, with fervent prayer, he laid the foundation stone of the new church.”

Brethren, though I may have detained you longer than usual, you will this once pardon an encroachment on your time, if it be considered that we are preaching and hearing for *eternity*!

Suffer then *the word of exhortation*, in a way of personal address and application.

Sinner! whoe'er thou art, standing on the dread precipice, yet careless and unconcerned; living as though thou should'st never die; what, if at midnight the cry were made, *Behold the bridegroom cometh!** Is thy lamp trimmed, and is there the *oil* of grace in thy heart?—Be wise ere it be too late—before the door of mercy is shut—and your *feet stumble on the dark mountains*, and ye *look for light in vain!*† Remember, *the pleasures of sin are but for a season*,‡ while their “bitter

* Matt. xxv. 6.

† Jer. xiii. 16.

‡ Heb. xi. 25.

“pains” are everlasting. The young man may “*rejoice in his youth*” rather than in his God, and the wicked may “*walk in the light of their fire, and in the sparks which they have kindled*; “*but this shall they have of God’s hand, they shall lie down in sorrow!*”*

Formalist! What though thou art no extortioner, unjust, still thou art a *sinner*. Whether we owe five hundred or fifty pence, we have *nothing to pay*,† and the master must *freely forgive us all*. If we are saved at all, it must be by the same grace, and in the same way, as Manasseh, Magdalen, or Paul; *for there is no difference, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*.‡

Convinced soul! Is it the language of your heart, “What must I do to be saved?” Behold the *Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!*§ His salvation nothing can go beyond, for it is to *the uttermost*.|| His blood, prevents thine being shed; and his death, is thy life for ever.

Returning Prodigal, who hast squandered thy substance, prostituted thy talents, and dissipated thy time—hear the word of the Lord: Though

* Isa. l. 11.

† Luke vii. 47.

‡ Rom. iii. 19—24.

§ John i. 29.

|| Heb. vii. 25.

*thou hast destroyed thyself, in me is thy help!** *Return, ye backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you; I will not cause my anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord.*† Here is a welcome not only to the house, but also to the heart of our heavenly Father. For thee, the fatted calf shall be killed: and not only shall there be melody among those who worship at the throne of grace, but fresh joy ‡ in the presence of those that surround the throne of glory.

Believing Soul! Follow on to know the Lord; and follow those who through faith and patience now inherit the promises.§ The same prize is set before the weakest saint: Be faithful unto death, and God will give *thee a crown of life!*¶ You have heard what Christ can do for us in a dying hour. Can the light of philosophy thus charm the tongue, and dissipate the *shadows of the evening* || of life? Let us then beware of all *new*, and consequently false lights. Continue in the good old way. Be an united and a praying people, and, *though sorrowful*, you shall be a happy people *here*; and after a few more rising and setting suns, a few more conflicts, and a few more fears, the warfare will be over, and the victory com-

* Hof. xiii. 9.

† Jer. iii. 12, 14.

‡ Luke xv. 10.

§ Heb. vi. 12.

|| Jer. vi. 4.

¶ Rev. ii. 10.

pleat. The helmet may then be cast away, for the crown will be obtained. Hope shall be changed into fruition, faith into vision, sorrow into joy, and darkness into everlasting day! *Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy wall salvation and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.**

7 AP 66

* Isa. l. 18—20.

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